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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /092 W
----------027943 170722Z /11
P R 170551Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 560
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 0053

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINS, ASEC, DJ
SUBJ: POLITICAL SCENE QUIET DURING ABSENCE PRESIDENT

REF: DJIBOUTI 0030

1. SUMMARY: DURING PRESIDENT'S ABSENCE IN THE PERSIAN GULF, THE POLITICAL SCENE HAS BEEN EXCEPTIONALLY QUIET ON THE SURFACE. ALTHOUGH LOCAL SECURITY FORCES CONTINUE THEIR IRREGULAR SCAVENGER HUNTS IN THE VARIOUS TOWNSHIPS WHICH MAKE UP DJIBOUTI, OFFICIALS REPORT PRIVATELY THAT THEY ARE FINDING NO MORE ARMS CACHES. THE APPARENT LACK OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY MAY INDICATE THA THE AFARS ARE WILLING TO GIVE PRESIDENT GOULED ANOTHER CHANCE.
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2. WITH THE EXPECTED RETURN OF PRES GOULED ON 16 JAN, EVERYONE EXPECTS THE GOVT CRISIS TO BE RESOLVED. IT HAS NOW BEEN EXACTLY ONE MONTH SINCE PRIME MIN DINI AND FOUR ETHNIC AFAR MINISTER RESIGNED. LIFE IN THE CAPITAL, WHILE GENERALLY QUIET, CONTINUES TO BE MARKED BY NIGHTLY RAIDS BY POLICE AND GENDARMERIE INTO AFRICAN QUARTIERS. PRESUMEDLY THESE RAIDS ARE LINKED IN EVERYONE'S MIND WITH THE GOVT

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CRISIS, AND MANY PEOPLE LOOK FORWARD TO THE NAMING OF A NEW GOVT
AS A WAY TO BE FREED OF THESE IRREGULAR BUT FREQUENT
INTERRUPTIONS.

3. IN THE MEANTIME, FORMER P.M. DINI CONTINUES TO BE COURTED
BY MOST DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, AS INDICATED IN LAST WEEK'S
SERIES OF MESSAGES, INTERESTED IN FOSTERING NATIONAL UNITY. HE SEES
HIS PRESENT ROLE AS CONSTRUCTIVE IN THE SENSE THAT UNIFICATION OF
THE AFARS UNDER HIS AUSPICES WOULD PROVIDE MEANS OF NEUTRALIZING
THE RADICALS THAT DOMINATED THE NOW-OUTLAWED BUT STILL OPERATIONAL
MOUVEMENT POPULAIRE DE LIVERATION (MPL).

4. ACCORDING KNOWLEDGEABLE LOCAL SOURCES, THE MPL HAS NOW ESTABLISHED
AN OFFICE IN EXILE IN ADEN. OFFICIALS OF THE GOVT OF DJIBOUTI,
WHICH HAS NO NAVY (THE PATROL BOAT PRESENTED BY THE FRENCH IS
IMMOBILIZEDD
DURING THREE-MONTH PERIOD FOR OVERHAUL), BELIEVE THAT THE
CLANDESTINE MPL HAS RECEIVED AND CONTINUES TO RECEIVE ARMS FROM ADEN.
CLARKE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DJIBOU00053
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780024-0449
Format: TEL
From: DJIBOUTI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780157/aaaabvhw.tel
Line Count: 81
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: c5d3cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 DJIBOUTI 30
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3764572
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL SCENE QUIET DURING ABSENCE PRESIDENT
TAGS: PDEV, PINS, ASEC, DJ
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c5d3cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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